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On your cheeks too, ye maidens, bloom lilies and roses; may their creators and mistresses, Innocence, Love and Joy, in like manner attend you united and inseparable.

#### 6. Sleep.

Among the immemorable Genii whom Jupiter had created to amuse and delight the short time of the laborious lives of men, was found also dark *Sleep*. "To what purpose am I here," said he, contemplating his own form, "amongst my more splendid and attractive brothers? How melancholy do I appear in the chorus of the sports, the joys and the wanton caprices of love! What boots it that I am desired by the unhappy, the burden of whose sufferings I take away, and whom I relieve by gentle oblivion: but as to them who never tire, who know nought of the cares of wretchedness, the circle of whose delights I only interrupt—

"Thou errest," said the father of genii and men, "in thy dark form wilt thou become the beloved genius of all mankind, for dost thou not believe that joys and sports fatigue? In reality they tire sooner than care and wretchedness, and transform themselves for the satiated in bliss, into the most wearisome satiety."

"Neither shall thou be without delights," he continued, "thou shalt even oft surpass all thy brothers in them." With these words he presented to him the silver-grey horn of pleasant dreams. "Scatter out of this," said he, "thy seeds of slumber, and the happy as well as unhappy shall love and wish for thee more than for all thy brothers. The ethereal hopes, the loves and the joys which lie in it, have been gathered by thy sisters the graces with enchanted hand out of our most blissful gardens. The ethereal dew which shines upon them, will animate with his own wish, every one whom thou meanest to render happy; and as the goddess of love has besprinkled them with our immortal nectar; hence the delight they give to mortals will be more graceful and delicate, than all the poor realities which the earth can afford. Out of the chorus of the most blooming sports and joys, they will gladly hasten into thy arms: poets

will sing thee, and in their songs strive to imitate the enchantment of thy art: even the innocent maiden will wish for thee, and thou wilt rest on her eyes, a sweet and blissful death."

The complaint of sleep was changed to triumphant thanks, and he was united with the most beautiful of the graces, *Pasithea*.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE ORKNEY ISLANDS,

*Written in Latin by Joseph Ben, a native, in the year 1529.*

THE first island is *North Ronaldsay*: To the north it is on a level with the sea, and occasions frequent shipwrecks to the English and other navigators: it is about four miles in circumference, and about sixty from Kirkwall. The people are wholly ignorant of the divine truths, because they are seldom instructed. There is great plenty of grain here, particularly barley and oats. In winter the inhabitants live on barley bread, and in summer, on small fish and milk. In the northern part of the island, very large animals, called in the native language *selchis*, are caught in hempen nets; there is also a large rock called *Selchskerry*, about half a mile from land, where sea-fowl haunt, and build their nests.

In this rock the sea monsters just now mentioned mount to the top when the sea is high, but when it falls they sink into a pit, from whence they can by no means escape, for there is no passage; the peasants finding them entrapped, collect about the rock; the monsters on seeing this rush upon them open mouthed, attack them by main force, and as it were provoke them to the combat. If the first of these monsters be unhurt, all the rest fall upon the men with their teeth; but if the first be killed, the others take to flight, and are easily caught. I have seen fifty of them taken together.

They have no fuel but dried seaweeds and turf, which sends out very little light in the fire; the light which they use in winter is made of fishes' entrails; they sometimes make, however, an excellent fire of the dung of

their cattle, dried in the sun. Neither frogs, dormice, or toads exist here; if a ship chances to bring dormice, they immediately perish as if they were poisoned.

*Sanday, 2.*

So called as if the sandy isle, because it abounds with sand, it is about two miles distant from the former: this island is about twelve miles in length, and two in breadth. The English and Germans are very frequently shipwrecked here, in a part towards the east, called the Star of Lopeness.

As I was once passing through the island, and fatigued, I betook myself to a church called Holy-cross, where I saw in a cemetery a number of human heads, above a thousand, greater than any three heads of people now living, and I drew some teeth out of the gums, which were larger than filberts. I was very much surprized, and being desirous of gratifying my curiosity, I had recourse to an old man, from whom I enquired what bones these were, and why they remained unburied? he replied, my son, this island was formerly subject to the people of Stronsay, to whom we paid an annual tribute, that we might live unmolested, as we were an unwarlike nation; at length we were nearly exhausted by the payment, and began to consider how we could free ourselves from it.

Then one more prudent than the rest said; "the day of payment is at hand; let us all conceal ourselves in the church, and fall upon our enemies unawares, when they come, so that not one of them escape"—to this all assented. On the appointed day, the people of Stronsay, with their wives, sons, daughters, servants, friends, and many others, having weighed anchor and set sail with a favourable breeze, came unarmed to our shores, where, after having disembarked, they spent the greater part of the day in dancing and festivity. In the mean time the people of Sanday, we who live in this island, rushed out, and being provided with suitable weapons, we attacked them, with loud shouts and a dreadful noise, and put them all to death, Thus were we liberated, and we never paid tribute since.

Both old and young, in these two islands are so much afflicted with ver-

min, that they can never be cured. Rabbits are plenty here in summer, and in winter become so tame as to be caught in the houses. The common people wear shoes made of hides, fastened with a leather strap, called in the language of the country, *Rifflings*.

*Stronsay, 3.*

Stronsay, or Sdronsay, is so called, as if the Streams' isle. This island is six miles in length and four in breadth. One half of it is barren. Some of the inhabitants worship a god called Tuidas, others do not. They have great belief in fairies, and say that men dying suddenly, *spend their life with them afterwards*, but this I do not believe.

*Papa Stronsay, 4.*

This is but a small island at a short distance from the last mentioned, its name signifies the little Stronsay. There is but one inhabitant here. In the middle of the island is a lake.

*Auskerray, 5.*

Another uncultivated island, where there is a breed of very wild horses.

*Shapinshay, 6.*

Shapinshay, the shipping Isle. The people living here are very impious: they worship the fairies, and other wicked beings; it is about six miles in length and two in breadth. Thither flow the seas by which sailors enter Kirkwall.

*Eloerhu'me, 7.*

This island is now uninhabited, but the ruins of houses and marks of tillage are still visible, and also a chapel. The following is the cause of its ruin and desolation. Two brothers dwelt here, the one a believer, the other an infidel; on a dispute which arose between them, the latter accused his brother before the bishop, of cohabiting with his kinswoman; the bishop, when he had examined the cause, being greatly enraged, banished them both. Their wives, on quitting the Island, knelt down and cursed it, wherefore no one has tilled it to the present day.

*Westray, 8.*

Westray, or the Western isle, is the most fertile of all the Orcades: some noble families dwell here. It has also an excellent fort or castle, but it is not yet completely finished. The people of this Island having had an engagement with the Lewismen, were routed

and killed to a man. One, however, remarkable for his strength and courage, fought for a long time after his comrades were slain; but at length his legs being cut off, he was forced to take to his knees while the battle lasted. In this island there is a very high mountain.

*Papa Westray, 9.*

Papa Westray signifies the little Western isle; it is subject to the former isle; and equally fertile with the rest. There is a lake in the very centre of this island, and in the lake an island in which is one little kid.

*Faray, 10.*

Faray, the pleasant isle. This island is very suitable for cattle, particularly cows, which feed through the pastures with great melody; the boys here sing along with the cattle. The whole island abounds with grain and fishes.

*Eday, 11.*

Eday was formerly the richest of all the northern islands, about thirty farmers lived in it, but were so completely extirpated by some invaders, that scarcely one is left. There is a great abundance of all things, particularly cattle. The men very often have battles with great sea monsters. The island is about ten miles in circumference.

*Egilschay, 12.*

Egilschay, the Kirk-isle, is one mile in length and about half a mile in breadth; in it is a church dedicated to St. Magnus. His Saint was born and educated during his infancy here, and gave a house and a lot of ground to his nurse, where she has built a chapel, in which she made a chamber in the ground, with a bed, table and seat, and other things necessary for a house, all of stone; the house is now destroyed, and corn grows over the place where it was, but the furniture still remains.

*Rousay, 13.*

Rousay, or the island of Rauland, is a large island, but the greatest part of it is uncultivated. It is about eight miles in circumference, and has some lofty mountains, where fires are seen very often lighted up at night in a very wonderful manner; without the assistance of men.

*Weir, 14.*

Weir is a small island, dedicated to the apostle Peter. It is so skreened by

the other islands, that it can scarcely be seen. A huge giant formerly dwelt here, the remains of whose house are yet in existence. Some say that this island was made of St. Magnus's boat, when he was escaping to the island of Egishay.

*Enhallow, 15.*

Enhallow, the holy island, is very small; the antients pretended that if the corn was reaped after sunset, drops of blood would immediately flow from the stalks; others say that if a horse be tyed up here at sunset, it will be seen walking at liberty all night. But you may easily see that these are fictitious and fabulous stories.

*Garsay, 16.*

A small mount rises in the middle of this island. The husbandmen inhabit a small part near the sea-shore.

*Damsay, 17.*

In this island there is no hill; it is the most temperate of all, and is by some called Tempe. There is a church in this island, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, much frequented by women. The women here are barren, and if at any time they become pregnant, they never survive the parturition. It is said that their eyebrows sometimes drop off in the course of an hour, but are afterwards restored. This island is two miles distant from Kirkwall.

*Pomonia, 18.*

Pomonia, so named, as if the middle of the apple, because it lies between the north and south isles, is also called Mainland. It contains many parishes, of which the following is a description:

*Dierness, or the ness of diers.* This parish was formerly woody, and infested by many wild animals; but the trees were torn up by the roots by a flood, and overwhelmed. In the northern part of this parish is a natural rock in the sea, to the top of which people climb on their hands and knees with great difficulty; there is on it a chapel called the Bairns of Brugh. Men, both old and young, boys, and servants without number, flock together here from all the islands, and when they have arrived, they ascend the rock, as I have just said, bare-footed, and praying, where but one at a time can come to the chapel. In it there is a pure and clear fountain, which indeed is truly wonderful. There

the men, with bent knees and uplifted hands, doubting the powers of God, pray to the Bairns of Brugh, with many incantations, throwing stones and water behind their backs, and going twice or three times round the chapel : when their prayers are done they return home, satisfied that their desires will be granted. They do not worship God here in purity.

In the year 1506, John Stewart landed in the Orkneys, and discovered a gold mine in this parish ; when he had loaded two ships, and was preparing cargoes for others, and was in the mine with the workmen, a raven cried out three times with a loud voice. The leader, and some others, immediately came out, but five were left behind, upon whom the rock fell with a great crash, destroying those within, while the rest were saved.

*St. Andrew.* This is a large parish, abounding in grain ; there is nothing remarkable recorded concerning it, except what befel a very celebrated man, called James Sinclair, who lived here, and engaged in a war with the people of Caithness, as will be mentioned hereafter. This noble general being taken, ran mad, and throwing himself into the sea, ended his life in this melancholy manner.

*Holm and Paplay.* These two parishes are united, and the same church serves both. Travellers going to the southern parts are ferried across from hence.

*St. Olaus.* This is a very flourishing and beautiful parish ; in the middle of which stands a town named Kirkwall, in which is a church dedicated to St. Magnus. Here also is a castle formerly built by the Sinclares ; also another church, which was burned to the ground by the English, called St. Olaus's Church, where malefactors are now buried.

The women here are much addicted to pleasure, which I attribute to the abundance of fish. In this parish is a very lofty mountain, called Wisford, whence all Pomona and the other islands are visible. It is a sign of war among the Orcades, when the fountain in its summit begins to burst forth.

*Frith* is another parish, where oysters are caught in abundance.

*Stenhouse.* In this parish is a large lake, twenty-four miles in circuit. In

a sepulchre in a hillock near the lake, were found the bones of a man, joined together, fourteen feet long, as my author says, and money was found there under his head. I myself saw the sepulchre. In the same place, near a lake, are lofty and broad stones, about a spear's length in height, enclosing a circuit of about half a mile.

In the year 1527, a war arose between the people of Caithness and the Orkneys : the former invaded the island with all their forces, with spears, darts, arrows, and the sound of trumpets. But, while these things were doing, the people of Pomona marched out to meet them, and the armies joined on a mountain of this parish near Bexwell. The invaders were all overthrown and slaughtered, so that not one escaped. The Earl's sepulchre is still to be seen in that place ; he was grandfather to the present count. The people of Orkney returned in triumph to the city, under the command of James Sinclair, of whom we have already spoken. The plain where this battle was fought is called Symmerland.

*Orpher* is another parish, affording a good harbour for fishermen.

*Stromness* has an excellent harbour, and an excellent outlet for a fleet. The French and Spaniards often escape tempests here, as no winds can injure vessels in this harbour. This port is called Cairstane, because it is fortified with stone. Healthy winds, called etesian, blow here. Here also is a most dangerous bridge to travellers, called the bridge of Vaith, where many are lost.

*Sandwich* abounds with rabbits ; it is the largest of all the parishes, and entirely cultivated.

*Bersa* is called a barony ; in it is a noble palace, where the king of the Orkneys formerly lived ; but when Julius Caesar governed the whole world, he was carried by force to Rome, and his kingdom was afterwards subject to the Romans, as the inscription on one stone proves. The king's name was Gavus.

*Haray* is another parish, where there are a set of most worthless drones, who are therefore called the sheep of Haray. Here is a great church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, called by the common People the Lady of Grace ;

concerning which many fables are told. Many flock hither from the other islands.

*Evie*, another parish where whales enter freely. It enjoys great abundance of corn.

*Rendal*. This parish was subject to the lord of Tullialion, and he was lord of it, as his house still testifies.

The length of Pomonia, from the *Bairns of Brugh* to the *Brugh of Birsay*, contains sixteen miles. There are about five thousand men capable of bearing arms in Pomonia, and as many in the islands. It has abundance of barley and oats; the men are very much addicted to drink and luxury, and often quarrel with one another. For example, when one neighbour invites another, if the guest be not sick before he departs, he quarrels with his host until he is sent home drunk. This is also the custom in the islands. They are very crafty and cunning, and use a dialect peculiar to themselves.

*Copinshaw*, 19.

*Copinshaw* is a small island, the first which is seen by those sailing to the Orkneys. One farmer resides on it. It has a lofty rock towards the east, on the sides of which wild fowl are taken, by letting down boys with ropes from the summit.

*South Ronaldsay*, 20.

*South Ronaldsay*, another island, where the men are very strong. It has a temple near the sea shore, in which is a very hard stone, commonly called a *Grey Whin*, six feet long and four broad, in which is the mark of two naked feet, that no workman could have carved. The old people say, that a Frenchman having been banished from his country, embarked on board a ship as an asylum; but a violent storm arising, the vessel was wrecked; he however, leaping on the back of a sea-monster, stood there humbly praying to God, and vowed that if he was carried safe to land he would build a church in memory of his preservation, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. His prayer was heard, and he came safe to shore. The monster by whose assistance he was preserved, was afterwards changed into a stone, and placed by the Frenchman in the church, where it still remains, as I have already said.

*Lambholme*, 21.

This is a very small, barren and uncultivated isle, in which great numbers of rabbits are killed by the men of the neighbouring islands.

*Flotay*, 22.

This island is level with the sea, and very beautiful. In it are the ruins of an old house, which some call a church, others a presbytery, of great length, where annual assemblies of the clergy were held. Three monuments are erected here, which we call crosses.

*Cavay*, 23.

*Cavay*, or the cheese island, noted for its excellent cheese. It is small, but very convenient for cattle and trees, on account of it being sheltered from the winds. There is on it one house with two cottages.

*Faray*, 24.

*Faray*, or the fair island. There are two of this name, the other is near Shetland. The island is barren and uncultivated, but celebrated for its fishery.

*Sownay*, 25.

*Sownay* affords a safe shelter for foreign ships and fishermen. Oats and barley grow here, though the soil is very sandy. Not far from Kirkness is *Braga*, well known to mariners.

*Ryssay*, 26.

A sandy, barren and uncultivated island. Here formerly was the best land in all the Orkneys.

*Burray*, 27.

*Burray*, or the Burge island, is small but abounding in barley.

*Wais*, 28.

The Pomonians call the inhabitants of this island the *Lyars of Wais*; the island is not large. There is no division between Hoy and Wais, it is one island at the ebbing of the tide.

*Hoy*, 29.

Here is a very lofty mountain, three miles in height, to the top of which there is no means of ascending, also another not so lofty. Between these is a stone worthy of notice; it is very large and high, and is said to have been shaped by a giant and his wife. One stone is a chamber, in which is a bed, very ingeniously made in the stone, by the man and woman; during the time of their sleeping here the woman was pregnant, as the stone testifies, for

that part of the bed where she lay, retains the shape of a pregnant woman. If it may be credited, birch grows in in this island, but not in the others; for they are all without trees. Here are white hares, which are hunted with dogs. In it is also abundance of birds called Leris, also of fish and other kinds of fowl.

It contains likewise mines of gold, lead and iron, and many other valuable things.

*Gransay, 30.*

A small island, but well-cultivated; very dangerous for ships.

*Southay, 31.*

Southay, or the southern island, is now uncultivated, but formerly abounded with cattle. All the natives ended their lives on the same day. This is no fable, but a real fact worthy of the notice of christians. On the festival of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, as they had no church of their own, they were obliged to go to a neighbouring island; and having embarked in a boat, both old and young, a sudden storm arose, and the vessel sunk through the violence of the waves. Upon which all the cattle in the island, oxen, sheep, calves, swine, dogs, whelps, and every other living creature, plunged themselves with the greatest fury into the sea, and were drowned, since which time no one has inhabited the island.

**OF THE HUSBANDRY OF THE ORKNEYS,**  
*Taken from another manuscript annexed to the preceding.*

They till not till the spring of the year, and as they till so they sow their oats. Their plough is drawn by four beasts going side by side. The caller, or driver, goes before the beasts backwards with a whip. The holder of the plough lies on with his side on the plough; the coulter and the stock being not two pound in weight; the oxen being yoked with chealts, and haims and breachems, which they call weassis, albeit they have horns. They sow in a creel made of straw, they call ane cassie, and of ane handful they make four casts.

Their horses live on bear-chaff, and grow exceeding fat on the same. They are very little, but quick and fiery. The men here keep the observations of the moon in so far, that they stall their marts at the waxing of the moon affirming they grow in the barrel.

Their calves never suck their mothers. Their corns are very good, to wit, bere and oats. They are handled only by the men; the women neither shake the straw, nor yet winnow the corn. They good their land with seaware, and lightly midden muck.

*To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.*

SIR,

IT is with great satisfaction that I observe the pages of your Magazine occasionally occupied with philosophical disquisitions, on subjects connected with the arts which adorn human life. You cannot have a nobler object than that of endeavouring to introduce improvements into the several branches of useful science; and attention to the subject will justly entitle you to the thanks of a judicious and discerning public.

I am sensible, that every thing connected with philosophy and the arts has been so fully investigated by professional men of the brightest talents, that it is no easy matter to discover any thing entitled to the character of a real improvement; and that few but those who devote their lives to the study of nature can hope to have the merit of raising science to a higher pitch of perfection. But unquestionably that man is fairly entitled to the character of a philosopher, who diligently follows the footsteps of those that have successfully applied themselves to the investigation of the phenomena of the natural and moral worlds, though he may not be able, by mounting to nobler heights in the arduous paths of science, to lay claim to the highest meed of literary renown. And therefore we should not abandon philosophical pursuits, because we lespair of equaling those who have gone before us. We should endeavour to improve our own minds, by the labours of others. To obtain literary fame is the happy lot but of a few—to make some progress in the several branches of useful and commercial learning, is in the power of all.

But many seem to have no natural taste for philosophical subjects, and require to have the beauties of science pointed out, and recommended to their attention. Your correspondents therefore cannot be improperly or unprofitably employed, when they